

Ammonia leak hurts two firemen

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An ammonia leak at a Safeway dairy plant in Oakland led to the evacuation of about 30 workers and left two firefighters with minor injuries yesterday.

Oakland firefighters George Drennon and Keith Flashberger were treated for minor chemical burns sustained at the Safeway Dairy Products Plant, 2240 Filbert St., said Assistant Chief Robert McGue.

Shortly after 7 a.m., about 15 firefighters were dispatched to the plant after workers reported the smell of ammonia coming from a pump in the facility's refrigeration unit.

By the time firefighters arrived, about 30 of the plant's workers already had evacuated the building. The toxic gas leaked from a ruptured pump and took about an hour to repair, McGue said.

The ammonia leak was "fairly significant" and could be detected from the street, McGue said.

After the repair, the leaked ammonia dissipated, and workers returned to the building, he said.

The plant later resumed operation.